

**REMARKS**

Applicants thank the Examiner for his acknowledgement that claim 8 contains allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all the limitations of the base claim [1] and any intervening claim [7].

Claim 1 has been rewritten to include the features of claim 7, and to also include some of the features of claim 8, requiring that the bottom component include a first and second horizontal component and a connecting piece. Applicants submit that the "U-shaped" limitation of original claim 8 is not necessary to distinguish claim 1 from the prior art of record. Support for a bottom component including a first and second horizontal component and a connecting piece without requiring the U-shape is provided by FIG. 9. FIG. 9 shows an embodiment in which bottom component 50 has the first and second horizontal components and connecting piece, but horizontal component 45' is not U-shaped. No new matter is added.

The prior art of record neither discloses nor suggests the bottom component including a first and second horizontal component and a connecting piece, with or without a U-shaped bottom component. Therefore, amended claim 8 should be allowable.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by US 4,054,012 (Paradisi). Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 15-22 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103 as being anticipated by US 5,916,095 (Tamlyn), or unpatentable over Tamlyn in combination with US 3,173,229 (Weber) or Weber and US 5,575,127 (O'Neal).

None of the cited references, alone or in combination, suggest the combination of, "a spacer element comprising a spacing component connected to the siding support element, an angle component connected to the spacing component, and a bottom component connected to the angle component, the bottom component including a first and second horizontal component and a connecting piece," as required by amended claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejections of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-6 and 8-22 depend directly or indirectly on claim 1. Therefore, the dependent claim should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Appl. No. 10/790,432  
Amdt. dated June 21, 2007  
Reply to Official Action of March 22, 2007

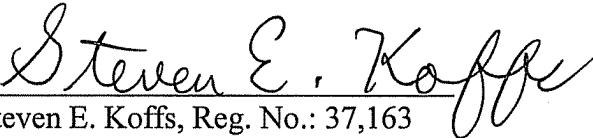
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Assistant Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment that may be associated with this communication to deposit account **04-1679**.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 6-21-07

  
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